

Architectural Remains
Unit B, Sub-Units 89 & 97
Jamestown Island, Virginia.

Donna J. ...

HABS No. VA-25

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Philip N. Stern, District Officer
21 Law Building, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS
UNIT B, SUB-UNITS 89 & 97
Jamestown Island
James City County
Virginia.

Owner: National Park Service

Date of Erection: 17th Century.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Unknown.

Present Condition: Foundation only; recovered, 1935.

Number of Stories: Unknown.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: None.

See article by Geo. C. Gregory in Va. Mag. of Hist. and Biography, July 1935.

Additional Data: (See following page)

ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS
UNIT B, SUB-UNITS 89 & 97
Jamestown Island
James City County
Virginia

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FOUNDATION

1. Location of Foundation:

The exact position of this brick foundation on Jamestown Island is given on the plot plan on the Title Sheet of the Historic American Buildings Survey sheets. The northwest corner of the building is located South 573'-4" and East 610'-0" from the Tercentenary Monument at Jamestown.¹

The arbitrary name; "Architectural Remains, Unit B, Sub-units 89 and 97", is of a temporary character, and will be replaced later by the proper historical designation.

2. Size of Foundation:

The overall dimensions of the foundation are, roughly, 43 1/2 feet by 64 feet.² The basement is rectangular and is divided into three practically equal rectangular sections, whose long sides are adjacent. Each section measures, roughly, 20 feet by 40-1/2 feet on the inside.² The basement walls at present average four feet in height.

3. The Three Sections:

Since the north and south exterior (13-1/2") walls of the eastern and middle sections have no breaks, but follow through between these two sections, it is evident that the eastern and middle sections were built at the same time. The west wall of the middle section has been replaced by another of later date and only 9" thick. Since this later 9" wall is bonded in with the north and south walls of the western section, it is evident that the western section is of a later period than the combined eastern and middle sections.⁴

- 1 - The starting point is at the northeast corner of Monument steps.
- 2 - For exact dimensions see sheet #1.
- 4 - See sheet #1. The western section could not have been built first because its 9" east wall is 4-1/2 " narrower than its 13-1/2" west wall, and was evidently meant to be an interior partition. Also see page 8, "eastern interior partition".

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4. The Six Basement Rooms:

Each of the three sections is divided into two rooms separated by fireplaces (and the foundations of fireplaces) back to back. The south room of each section is approximately⁵ three feet longer than the north room. The average size of the south rooms is 20 feet long by 17-1/2 feet wide and of the north rooms 20 feet long by 14-1/2 feet wide.⁵

5. Passageways and Doorways:

On the western side of each back to back fireplace or foundation of fireplace is a passage giving circulation between the north and south rooms, and a space for what may have been a closet.

No doorway exists connecting any two of the sections. Although the interior partition between the eastern and middle sections has disappeared at the northern end for the length of eight feet, there are no existing traces of a doorway.⁶

Traces of wooden sills were found in the doorways of the small passageways of the middle and western sections.

6. Stairs:

Each of the six rooms has an entrance stairway from the outside. The brick stairs are placed near the eastern ends of the north and south walls of each section, with the exception of the stair along the south wall of the western section, which stair is placed in the middle of the wall.

The south stairway of the middle section and the north stairway of the western section do not bond with the main walls and were probably added at a later time.⁷

The width of the stairs averages between 3-1/2 feet and 4 feet. There are seven or eight risers in each stair, the riser averaging 8" and the tread varying from 8" to 11".⁸

5 - For exact measurements, see sheet #1.

6 - See sheet #1.

7 - See sheet #1.

Traces of wood nosing were found on every stair except the stair on the south side of the middle section, which has brick nosings.

7. Walls:

English bond is used throughout the foundation except in a few places where the bricks have been placed irregularly. The thicknesses of the walls vary: The north and south walls of the foundation are 16-1/2" thick. The east wall is 14" and the west wall is 13-1/2" and western 9".¹⁰

8. Footings:

All existing footings rest on undisturbed clay as far as could be determined.

Projecting or spread footings were found in part of the exterior east wall, in that part of the north wall of the eastern section which is between the corner and the stair, in the wall between the fireplaces (or foundation of fireplaces) of the middle section, and in the breasts or facings on the west side of these fireplaces.¹¹

The footing of an older wall was discovered underneath the eastern interior partition. Between this old footing and the bottom of the present wall lie from 2-1/2" to 4-1/2" of broken brick, mortar, sand and oyster shells.¹⁵

It is evident that the eastern interior partition is of later date than the exterior walls of the eastern and middle sections; because, first, the partition does not bond with these walls; second, there is an older footing beneath it; and third it has the same kind of mortar^{15a} as that in the western section.

10 - See sheet #1.

13 - See sheet #5, section 8.

14 - See sheet #5, section 7.

15 - See sheet #52; sheet #5, section 10.

15a - See "Mortar", page 16.

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9. Floors:

The floor of the eastern section is of earth, except for part of the floor of the north room, which has "Dutch" brick on edge in a continuous pattern.

In the middle section the north room has a continuous pattern of "English" ¹⁹ or colonial brick laid flat; the south room has continuous pattern (in different directions) of either whole bricks or fragments of brick laid flat. Mingled with these bricks are irregular fragments of slate flagstone, the largest of which is not longer than 18".

In the floor of the western section the "English" ¹⁹ or colonial brick are laid on edge in a continuous pattern.

Sections of the floor were taken up to see what lay underneath. The various thicknesses of the layers of sand, oyster shells, broken brick, etc., are given on sheet #1 of this report.

10. Fireplaces:

Each north room of the three sections was found to have a fireplace through the evidence of spaulded brick and traces of charcoal in the hearths. No such evidence was found in what appear to be fireplaces in the south rooms of the three sections, and it may be assumed that the south rooms did not have fireplaces, but only the foundations of main floor fireplaces.

Both the fireplaces and the foundations of fireplaces average 8'-0" wide and 3'-4" deep, and have brick floors or hearths.

In the south rooms of the middle and western sections the springs of the arches of the fireplace foundations remain, while the arches themselves have disappeared.

19 - Bricks of the seventeenth century in England were of the same size as those used in this foundation; See Briggs, M.S., Homes of the Pilgrim Fathers in England and America, p. 15; and Isham, N.M., Early Connecticut Houses, p. 181.

11. Oven:

An oven is built into the west side of the fireplace in the north room of the western section. It is ovular in shape on the inside, but square on the outside, and shows evidence of having been a later addition to the fireplace.

In the foundation of the fireplace in the south room of the middle section is a square brick addition, 3'-7-1/2" by 4'-4-1/4". The use of this addition is unknown.

12. Brick-bats or Brick Fragments:

Brick-bats were found in or near this foundation as follows:

(a) A pile of loose brick²² was discovered about 40" from the northeast corner and about three and a half feet above the bottom of the wall. The bricks are in no order and appear as if they had been dumped. The top-soil extends a few inches around the pile and is darker than the yellow-brown solid clay.

(b) Close along the outside face of the north wall of the middle section were found scattered brick probably thrown in when back fill around the wall was made. The brick extended to about 12" from the wall and lay about 20" below the top of foundation wall.

(c) At the base of the northwest corner was uncovered an area of mortar, sand, broken brick and ashes.

(d) About three feet in a northwesterly direction from the southwest corner was discovered a pile of scattered brick on the level with the base of the walls. At the southwest corner itself are four courses at the bottom of the walls and forming a projection of 27" out from the corner and in line with the south wall. These four courses are laid up in mortar and are of the same type as those in the western section.

22 - The size of pile is 17" x 16" x 15" deep.

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(a) Where the north wall of the eastern section had broken down and been removed, a loose fill of broken brick and mortar was found on level with the base of the former wall. These loose brick are bounded on the outside by a course of stretchers which project 9" beyond the north wall line.

(c) Fragments of loose brick were discovered under the brick floor of the south room of the middle section.